

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 THE HA 04300 261606Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 261534Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6539

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 4300

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, EAID, PO, FR, N, GW, AO, UK

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE POLITICAL CRISIS AND ALLIED DEMARCHES

REF: STATE 202520

1. IN VIEW OF CHARACTER AND URGENCY OF INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL I REQUESTED APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL WHO AGREED TO RECEIVE ME ON VERY SHORT NOTICE EARLY THIS AFTERNOON DESPITE FULL SCHEDULE RESULTING FROM ONGOING TWO-DAY ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SOME 60 DUTCH CHIEFS OF MISSION, INCLUDING DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO LISBON.

2. AFTER HEARING MY PRESENTATION FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT GON WAS KEENLY AWARE OF PRESENT CRITICAL SITUATION AND HAD HOPED OVER PAST WEEKEND FOR SOME CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENTS. HE RECOGNIZED SITUATION WAS PRECARIOUS AND COULD STILL CHANGE MOMENTARILY. IN HIS JUDGMENT EC-9 JULY DECISION CONDITIONING AID FOR PORTUGAL ON DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM CONSTITUTED CONTINUING SIGNIFICANT FACTOR. HE BELIEVED THAT ANY NEW ACTION WITH LISBON WOULD PROBABLY BE MOST EFFECTIVE IF AGAIN IT REPRESENTED UNANIMOUS POSITION OF EC-9. FOR THIS REASON HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO

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PAGE 02 THE HA 04300 261606Z

TAKE INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE IN PRESENT SITUATION, THOUGH

HE WOULD CERTAINLY DISCUSS THIS POSSIBILITY WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES ON BASIS OF US APPROACH. AT THE SAME TIME HE GAVE ME DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT DUTCH WOULD PROBABLY PREFER IN ANY CASE TO CONSULT EC-9 COLLEAGUES, INCLUDING ITALIANS AS EC-9 PRESIDENT, BEFORE TAKING ACTION. FOR THIS REASON I REPEATED OUR ESTIMATE OF THE URGENCY OF PRESENT SITUATION, WHICH HE AGAIN ACCEPTED.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL AND HE, AS WELL AS FRG PM SCHMIDT AND SWEDISH PM PALME, HAD ALL MET SEPARATELY WITH PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AT HELSINKI. ALL HAD EMERGED WITH DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT WAS WEAK, VACILLATING INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS IN NO SENSE HIS OWN MASTER. HELSINKI CONVERSATIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN ALL THREE INSTANCES IN PRESENCE OF OTHER PORTUGUESE, WHOSE FUNCTION SEEMED TO BE BOTH TO INSURE THAT PRESIDENT DID NOT ACT INDEPENDENTLY AND TO BE IN POSITION TO REPORT BACK TO OTHERS IN LISBON PRECISE TERMS OF CONVERSATIONS.

4. VAN DER STOEL EMPHASIZED THAT DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL WAS NOW IN THE HAGUE FOR AMBASSADORIAL CONFERENCE AND WOULD BE HERE AT LEAST THROUGH TOMORROW. WHILE HE LEFT OPEN POSSIBILITY THAT AMBASSADOR MIGHT RETURN TO LISBON LATER THIS WEEK, THIS WAS NOT PRESENT PLAN SINCE AMBASSADOR HAD OTHER COMMITMENTS HERE THIS WEEK. FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY PROMISING TO INFORM ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE CONCERNING DUTCH RESPONSE TO APPROACH.

5. ON BASIS THIS CONVERSATION IT APPEARS THAT DUTCH ARE UNLIKELY TO REACT TO US APPROACH WITHOUT CHECKING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF EC-9. DUTCH MAY ALSO FEEL EVENTS IN LISBON ARE MOVING SO RAPIDLY THAT NEW APPROACH WOULD SERVE NO REAL PURPOSE. AT THE SAME TIME DUTCH INTEREST IN DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL IS SO STRONG THAT US APPROACH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY STRENGTHEN DISPOSITION TO EXERT MAXIMUM EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975THEHA04300
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750295-0259
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750815/aaaaanqa.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 202520
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <28 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PORTUGUESE POLITICAL CRISIS AND ALLIED DEMARCHES
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, EAID, PO, FR, NL, GE, AO, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006